Director of Central Intelligence

Secret

25X1

CB

Interagency Intelligence Memorandum

Soviet Military Production, 1974–85

Key Judgments

Secret

NI IIM 86-10002W
March 1986

Copy 42

25X1

NI IIM 86-10002W

SOVIET MILITARY PRODUCTION, 1974-85

KEY JUDGMENTS

The full text of this Memorandum is being published separately with regular distribution.

25X1

SCOPE NOTE

This Memorandum establishes an interagency data base on the yearly production of Soviet strategic and general purpose weapon systems and equipment for the period 1974-85. The weapon systems represented here are virtually all of the most significant items of equipment, measured in terms of both the extensiveness of their deployment and the political and military implications they possess, and with a bias toward inclusion of weapons still in production. There is overwhelming interagency agreement on both general and specific estimates. There are, however, systems for which the Central Intelligence Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency differ in their estimates of production

25X1
25X1

Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2011/01/20 : CIA-RDP90R00038R000100040001-0

25X1

KEY JUDGMENTS

The Soviet defense industries exhibit stability and momentum over long periods of time that have resulted in levels of weapon production that are extraordinary by any standard. The Soviets during the period 1974-85 produced:

- Some 2,150 intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and about 1,350 submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs).
- About 700 (INR), 750 (CIA), or 1,100 (DIA) intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBMs).
- About 1,000 manned and unmanned military or joint-use spacecraft, and 1,350 space launch vehicles.
- Some 10,700 (DIA) or 11,200 (CIA) cruise missiles.
- About 144,000 crew-served surface-to-air missiles (SAMs).
- Some 9,700 short-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs).
- Almost 27,000 aircraft, including 12,300 fighters and 11,000 helicopters.
- Over 380 new ships, including 114 submarines and 88 major surface combatants.
- About 30,000 modern tanks, 37,000 other modern armored vehicles, and 30,000 (CIA) or 32,000 (DIA) of the most important artillery and multiple rocket launcher systems.
- About 13,000 stand-alone radars.
- Over 2.5 million trucks for military use, including almost 600,000 heavy trucks.

25X1

During the past decade the Soviets began to emphasize multimission weapons that required state-of-the-art technologies. Earlier design practices that favored using off-the-shelf, standardized parts and subsystems gave way to ones that required greater technical innovation. The share of these more advanced, complex weapons has increased as a proportion of the total since the mid-1970s, suggesting that the Soviets want more such weapons and are willing to pay the higher prices associated with them. The Soviets certainly want to minimize costs wherever possible, but we do not believe there is an overriding design

25X1

imperative to hold costs down. While Soviet designers seek to minimize weapon system costs, their fundamental concern is to meet military and national security requirements.

25X1

In general, Soviet weapon production rates are two to five (or more) times greater than US rates. From 1974 through 1984, the Soviets produced roughly 3.5 times as many ICBMs and SLBMs as the United States and over seven times as many nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs). While the USSR produced some 700 to 1,000 IRBMs and about 340 strategic long- and intermediate-range bombers, the United States produced 116 Pershing II medium-range ballistic missiles and only six such bombers. In the tactical field the Soviets produced about 5.5 times as many crew-served, land-based SAMs as the United States, in excess of twice the number of cruise missiles, two times as many fighters, and over three times as many helicopters. They produced twice as many submarines other than SSBNs and over 20 percent more major surface combatants. They produced 3.5 times as many tanks and over five times as many major artillery pieces.[1]

25X1

Our estimates in this Memorandum cover production of 233 military systems (including 12 ship-conversion programs), ammunition, and three categories of trucks. CIA and DIA reached year-by-year agreed-upon estimates of production for the 12-year period for almost 90 percent of these, including all spacecraft, SAMs, SRBMs, ships, and stand-alone radars and almost all aircraft, cruise missiles, and artillery. CIA and DIA continue to have differing cumulative production estimates for 12 of the 15 strategic ballistic missiles covered and for eight of the nine armored vehicles that were reviewed—this despite the fact that CIA and DIA are in general agreement on the total number of strategic ballistic missiles and armored vehicles produced during the 12-year period.

25X1

Our collective confidence in these estimates ranges from high—that is, we are confident we are within 10 percent of the actual production figure—for the larger systems that are fixed or take long periods to construct —we could be off by 40 percent or more from the actual number—for very small, highly mobile radar systems. Generally speaking, we have high confidence in our estimates of those systems that, for various reasons, we are able to count, either at the production facility or once deployed. For weapons that are not counted on a one-for-one basis, other data are sometimes sufficient to warrant high-confidence estimates nonetheless.

25X1

[1] The estimated Soviet data used for these comparisons run through 1984 in order to be compatible with the US data available at the time of drafting. As such they do not, for example, include continued US production of the B-1 bomber, the Pershing II MRBM, the Trident SSBN, or the M-1 tank. Nevertheless, this comparison would deviate only to a small degree from a comparison that included the year 1985 because both US and Soviet production rates showed some increase during the year.

25X1

25X1

Single production figures for systems for which this sort of hard production data are unavailable largely connote that CIA and DIA analysts agree with the broad assumptions used in creating such production estimates; they still may have only moderate confidence in some of these estimates, however.

25X1

The trend in Soviet military production rates was consistently upward in the early part of the period, but, with only a few exceptions, the rates peaked in about 1977 or 1980 and then declined:

— Production rates for ICBMs, cruise missiles, SAMs, SRBMs, helicopters, major surface combatants, and, according to DIA, SLBMs reached peaks during the period 1976-78. Of these, only production of SAMs and, according to DIA, cruise missiles regained their peak rates by 1985.

— Production for another group of systems—including the SS-20 IRBM, transport and fighter aircraft, tanks, light armored vehicles, and artillery—reached peak rates during the period in about 1980. Of these, only light armored vehicles, according to CIA, regained their peak rate by 1985.

— A few systems reached peak rates during the period somewhat earlier; SLBMs, according to CIA, and submarines in 1974, stand-alone radars in 1975, and helicopters in 1976. Of these, only the radars regained their former peak production rate.

25X1

Several factors probably are largely responsible for this downward trend in the data:

— The Soviets decided to introduce more complex, sophisticated, and capable weapon systems into production. More complex systems embody substantial improvements in performance and can often replace older systems on a less than one-for-one basis. Thus the Soviets may have deliberately reduced their quantitative requirements for fielding the newer systems.

— With respect to these more sophisticated systems fielded recently by the Soviets, the most prominent advances have been in the areas of electronic systems and solid propulsion for missiles. In these areas, the Soviets have experienced growing difficulties and delays in development which have postponed or interfered with intended serial production. At one time or another we have observed these difficulties in such programs as those for the SS-X-24 and SS-25 ICBMs, the SA-10 and SA-X-12 SAMs, the SU-27 Flanker aircraft, and the T-64B tank. One result of

25X1

these difficulties and delays has been lower production. Programs that should have entered production sooner and begun deployment in this period will not reach their full momentum until later in the 1980s.

— The advanced weapons fielded during the period also have required greater resources and effort and, hence, have been more costly. In the CIA view, though we have no concrete evidence, the burden of these higher costs in some cases may have contributed to a Soviet decision not to sustain production at historical rates.

25X1

The Soviets have responded to these technical challenges by modernizing their defense manufacturing base. We have observed a variety of new materials and manufacturing processes being incorporated in the aircraft, missile, shipbuilding, ground arms, and electronics industries. Moreover, a number of programs have recently completed, or soon will complete, their test phases and will enter serial production.

25X1

25X1

all indicate that the Soviets will continue to produce substantial numbers of weapons and other major military equipment over the rest of the decade and into the 1990s

25X1